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ADDRESS

OF THE

TWELVE UNITED COLONIES

OF

NORTH AMERICA.

BY THEIR

REPRESENTATIVES

IN

America Continental
CONGRESS

TO THE PEOPLE OF

IRELAND.

PHILADELPHIA:

PRINTED BY W. AND T. BRADFORD, 1775.

ADDRESSES

OF THE

UNITED STATES

OF

AMERICA



POST OFFICE

TO THE

POSTMASTER

GENERAL

POSTS AT W. AND T. BRADFORD, N.Y.

To the PEOPLE of IRELAND.

From the Delegates appointed by the United Colonies of *Newhampshire, Massachusetts-Bay, Rhod-Island and Providence Plantations, Connecticut, New-York, New-Jersey, Pennsylvania; the Lower Counties on Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North-Carolina and South-Carolina*, in General Congress at *Philadelpia*, the 10th of May, 1775.

FRIENDS and FELLOW SUBJECTS,

AS the important contest into which we have been driven, is now become interesting to every European state, and particularly affects the members of the British Empire, we think it our duty to address you on the subject. We are desirous, as is natural to injured innocence, of possessing the good opinion of the virtuous and humane—We are peculiarly desirous of furnishing you with a true state of our motives and objects; the better to enable you to judge of our conduct with accuracy, and determine the merits of the controversy with impartiality and precision.

HOWEVER incredible it may appear, that, at this enlightened period, the leaders of a nation, which in every age has sacrificed hecatombs of her bravest patriots on the altar of liberty, should presume gravely to assert and by force of arms attempt to establish an arbitrary sway over the lives, liberties, and property of their fellow-subjects in America; it is nevertheless a most deplorable and indisputable truth.

THESE colonies have, from the time of their first settlement, for near two centuries, peaceably enjoyed these very rights of which the Ministry have for *ten* years past endeavoured by fraud and by violence to deprive them. At the conclusion of the last war the genius of England and the spirit of wisdom, as if offended at the ungrateful treatment of their sons, withdrew from the British counsels and left that nation a prey to a race of ministers, with whom ancient English honesty and benevolence disdained to dwell. From that period, jealousy, discontent, oppression and discord have raged among all his Majesty's subjects; and filled every part of his dominions with distress and complaint.

NOT content with our purchasing of Britain at her own price, cloathing and a thousand other articles used by near three millions of people on this vast Continent; not satisfied with the amazing profits arising from the monopoly of our trade, without giving us either time to breathe after a long though glorious war, or the least credit for the blood and treasure we have expended in it;—Notwithstanding the zeal we had manifested for the service of our Sovereign, and the warmest attachment

ment to the constitution of Britain and the people of England, a black and horrid design was formed, to convert us from freemen into slaves, from subjects into vassals, and from friends into enemies.

TAXES, for the first time since we landed on the American shores, were, without our consent, imposed upon us; an unconstitutional edict to compel us to furnish necessaries for a standing army, that we wished to see disbanded, was issued; and the legislature of New-York suspended for refusing to comply with it—Our antient and inestimable right of trial by jury was, in many instances, abolished; and the common law of the land made to give place to Admiralty jurisdictions. Judges were rendered, by the tenure of their commissions, entirely dependent on the will of a Minister. New crimes were arbitrarily created; and new courts, unknown to the constitution, instituted.—Wicked and insidious Governors have been set over us; and dutiful petitions for the removal of even the notoriously infamous Governor *Hutchinson*, were branded with the opprobrious appellation of scandalous and defamatory.—Hardy attempts have been made under colour of parliamentary authority to seize Americans, and carry them to Great Britain to be tried for offences committed in the Colonies.—Ancient charters have no longer remained sacred—that of the Massachusetts-Bay was violated; and their form of government essentially mutilated and transformed—On pretence of punishing a violation of some private property, committed by a few disguised individuals, the populous and flourishing town of Boston was surrounded

surrounded by fleets and armies ; its trade destroyed ; its ports blocked up ; and thirty thousand citizens subjected to all the miseries attending so sudden a convulsion in their commercial metropolis ; and to remove every obstacle to the rigorous execution of this system of oppression, an Act of Parliament was passed evidently calculated to indemnify those, who might, in the prosecution of it, even embroe their hands in the blood of the inhabitants.

THO' passed by such an accumulation of undeserved injuries, America still remembered her duty to her Sovereign.—A Congress, consisting of Deputies from Twelve United Colonies assembled. They in the most respectful terms laid their grievances at the foot of the throne ; and implored his Majesty's interposition in their behalf—They also agreed to suspend all trade with Great Britain, Ireland and the West Indies ; hoping, by this peaceable mode of opposition, to obtain that justice from the British Ministry which had been so long solicited in vain.—And here permit us to assure you, that it was with the utmost reluctance we could prevail upon ourselves, to cease our commercial connection with your island.—*Your* Parliament had done us no wrong—*You* had ever been friendly to the rights of mankind ; and we acknowledge with pleasure and with gratitude, that *your* nation has produced patriots, who have nobly distinguished themselves in the cause of humanity and America. On the other hand, we were not ignorant that the labor and manufactures of Ireland, like those of the silk-worm, were of little moment to herself ; but served only to give
luxury

luxury to those, who *neither toil nor spin*—We perceived, that if we continued our commerce with you, our agreement not to import from Britain would be *fruitless*; and were therefore compelled to adopt a measure, to which nothing but absolute necessity could have reconciled us—It gave us however, some consolation to reflect, that should it occasion much distress, the fertile regions of America would afford you a safe asylum from poverty, and in time from oppression also—an asylum, in which many thousands of your countrymen, have found hospitality, peace, and affluence; and become united to us by all the ties of consanguinity, mutual interest and affection—Nor did the Congress stop here—Flattered by a pleasing expectation, that the justice and humanity which had so long characterized the English nation, would, on proper application afford us relief; they represented their grievances in an affectionate address to their bretheren in Britain, and intreated their aid and interposition in behalf of these colonies.

THE more fully to evince their respect for their Sovereign, the unhappy people of Boston were requested by the Congress to submit with patience to their fate; and all America united in a resolution to abstain from every species of violence—During this period that devoted town suffered unspeakably. Its inhabitants were insulted, and their property violated—Still relying on the clemency and justice of his Majesty and the nation, they permitted a few regiments to take possession of their town; to surround it with fortifications; and to cut off all intercourse between them and their friends in the country.

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WITH anxious expectation did all America wait the event of their petition—All America laments its fate—Their Prince was deaf to their complaints : And vain were all attempts to impress him with a sense of the sufferings of his American subjects ; of the cruelty of the *Task-masters*, and of the *many plagues* which impended over his dominions. Instead of directions for a candid enquiry into our grievances, insult was added to oppression, and our long forbearance rewarded with the imputation of cowardice. Our trade with foreign states was prohibited ; and an act of Parliament passed to prevent our even fishing on our own coasts—Our peaceable Assemblies for the purpose of consulting the common safety, were declared seditious ; and our asserting the very rights which placed the Crown of Great Britain on the heads of the three successive Princes of the House of Hanover, stiled rebellion—Orders are given to re-enforce the troops in America—The wild and barbarous savages of the wilderness have been solicited by gifts to take up the hatchet against us ; and instigated to deluge our settlements with the blood of innocent and defenceless women and children. The whole country was moreover alarmed with the expected horrors of domestic insurrections. Refinements in parental cruelty, at which the genius of Britain must blush ! Refinements which admit not of even being recited without horror, or practised without infamy ! We should be happy, were these dark machinations the mere suggestions of suspicion—We are sorry to declare, that we are possessed of the most authentic and indubitable evidence of their realty.

THE

THE Ministry, bent on pulling down the pillars of the constitution, endeavoured to erect the standard of despotism in America; and if successful, Britain and Ireland may shudder at the consequences!

THREE of their most experienced Generals are sent to wage war with their fellow subjects; and *America* is amazed to find the name of *Howe* in the catalogue of her enemies--She loved his brother.

DESPAIRING of driving the Colonies to resistance, by any other means, than actual hostility, a detachment of the army at Boston marched into the country in all the array of war; and unprovoked, fired upon, and killed several of the inhabitants--The neighbouring farmers suddenly assembled, and repelled the attack--From this, all communication between the town and country was intercepted--The citizens petitioned the General for permission to leave the town, and he promised on surrendering their arms, to permit them to depart with their other effects---They accordingly surrendered their arms, and the General violated his faith--Under various pretences, passports were delayed and denied; and many thousands of the inhabitants are, at this day, confined in the town in the utmost wretchedness and want. The lame, the blind and the sick, have indeed been turned out into the neighbouring fields; and some, eluding the vigilance of the sentries have escaped from the town, by swimming to the adjacent shores.

THE war having thus began on the part of General Gage's troops, the country armed and embodied.

bodied. The reinforcements from Ireland soon after arrived; a vigorous attack was then made upon the provincials. In their march, the troops surrounded the town of Charlestown, consisting of about four hundred houses, then recently abandoned to escape the fury of a relentless soldiery. Having plundered the houses they set fire to the town, and reduced it to ashes. To this wanton waste of property, unknown to civilized nations, they were prompted, the better to conceal their approach under cover of the smook. A shocking mixture of cowardice and cruelty, which then first tarnished the lustre of the British arms, when aimed at a brother's breast! But blessed be God, they were restrained from committing farther ravages, by the loss of a very considerable part of their army, including many of their most experienced officers. The loss of the inhabitants was inconsiderable.

COMPELLED therefore to behold thousands of our countrymen imprisoned, and men, women and children involved in promiscuous and unmerited misery. When we find all faith at an end, and sacred treaties turned into tricks of state. When we perceive our friends and kinsmen massacred, our habitations plundered, our houses in flames, and their once happy inhabitants fed only by the hand of charity. Who can blame us for endeavouring to restrain the progress of desolation? Who can censure us for repelling the attacks of such a barbarous band? Who, in such circumstances, would not obey the great, the universal, the divine law of self-preservation?

THOUGH

THOUGH vilified as wanting spirit, we are determined to behave like men. Though insulted and abused, we wish for reconciliation. Though defamed as seditious, we are ready to obey the laws. And though charged with rebellion, will cheerfully bleed in defence of our Sovereign in a righteous cause. What more can we say, what more can we offer?

BUT we forbear to trouble you with a tedious detail of the various and fruitless offers and applications we have repeatedly made, not for pensions, for wealth or for honours, but for the humble boon of being permitted to possess the fruits of honest industry, and to enjoy that degree of Liberty, to which God and the constitution hath given us an undoubted right.

BLESSED with an indissoluble union; with a variety of internal resources, and with a firm reliance on the justice of the supreme Disposer of all human events, we have no doubt of rising superior to all the machinations of evil and abandoned ministers. We already anticipate the golden period, when liberty, with all the gentle arts of peace and humanity shall establish her mild dominion in this western world; and erect eternal monuments to the memory of those virtuous patriots and martyrs, who shall have fought and bled and suffered in her cause.

ACCEPT our most grateful acknowledgments for the friendly disposition you have always shewn towards us. We know that *you* are not without your grievances. We sympathize with you in
your

your distress, and are pleased to find that the design of subjugating us, has persuaded administration to dispense to Ireland, some vagrant rays of ministerial sunshine. Even the tender mercies of government have long been cruel towards *you*; In the rich pastures of Ireland, many hungry paricides have fed, and grown strong to labour in its destruction. We hope the patient abiding of the meek may not always be forgotten; and God grant that the iniquitous schemes of extirpating liberty from the British empire may be soon defeated. But we should be wanting to ourselves, we should be perfidious to posterity; she should be unworthy that ancestry from which we derive our descent, should we submit with folded arms to military butchery and depredation, to gratify the lordly ambition, or sate the avarice of a British Ministry. In defence of our persons and properties, under actual violation, we have taken up arms. When that violence shall be removed, and hostilities cease on the part of the aggressors, they shall cease on our part also. For the achievement of this happy event, we confide in the good offices of our fellow subjects beyond the Atlantic. Of their friendly disposition we do not yet despond; aware as they must be, that they have nothing more to expect from the same common enemy, than the humble favour of being last devoured.

By order of the Congress,

JOHN HANCOCK, *President.*

Philadelphia, July 28, 1775.

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